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UNCLAS ABUJA 001904

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: THE ECOWAS LOGISTICS DEPOT AND UNSC SANCTIONS

REF: FREETOWN 707

1. This is an action request. See paragraph 4.

2. As UNAMSIL vacates Sierra Leone at the end of the year, ECOWAS will assume control of the Hastings Airfield Complex outside of Freetown for the purpose of establishing a full-service peacekeeping logistics depot. This depot is one of the key elements of the nascent ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF). The depot is intended to hasten the deployment of peacekeeping forces by supplying essential equipment, including (but not limited to) vehicles, water purification, communications, and generators, both at deployment and to sustain a deployed force. ECOWAS is currently involved in negotiations with the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) on a Memorandum of Understanding to spell out the specific responsibilities of each party in the operation of the depot. The USG, through the Department, has agreed to take on the "lead donor" role to coordinate the activities of the donor community in support of this project.

3. In 1998, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1171 in response to the conflict in Sierra Leone. Among other things, the resolution establishes a ban on the import of "arms and related materiel of all types, including weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment and spare parts for the aforementioned, to Sierra Leone other than to the Government of Sierra Leone." There is an exemption "for the sole use in Sierra Leone of the Military Observer Group of ECOWAS." The materials banned are exactly the type of items the depot is designed to stock. ECOWAS' Director of Defense and Security, General Okae, is asking if the UNSC resolution still applies. If it does, General Okae is asking what the necessary next steps are.

4. ACTION REQUEST: Please advise if operation of the planned ECOWAS Peacekeeping Logistics Depot is in conflict with UNSC Resolution 1171, and what actions Post should take if there is such a conflict. END ACTION REQUEST.
CAMPBELL